

Washington, DC-Congressman **Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23)** today, on Equal Pay Day, called for ensuring that there is truly equal pay for equal work in this country through his continued support of the Paycheck Fairness Act and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which passed the House last year.

"Equal pay is not just a women's issue, it's a family issue," said Rodriguez. "The wage gap hurts everyone - husbands, wives, children, and parents - because it lowers family incomes that pay for essentials like groceries, doctors' visits, and child care. When women earn more, an entire family sees the benefits. Closing the wage gap is an integral part of strengthening our families."

In 1963, when the Equal Pay Act was signed, women who worked full-time, year-round made 59 cents on average for every dollar earned by men. In 2006, women earned 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. That is progress - but it is slow progress. It means that the wage gap has narrowed by less than half a cent per year.

The inequity is even worse for women of color. African-American women earn only 68 cents and Latino women 57 cents for every dollar that men earn, according to American Association of University Women (AAUW) statistics.

This week Congress will mark Equal Pay Day when the Senate attempts to pass the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and send it directly to the President's desk. The House passed this bill last July. The bill would restore a basic protection against pay discrimination by remedying a May 2007 Supreme Court decision that overturned longstanding precedent making it more difficult for workers to pursue pay discrimination claims. Specifically, the bill would restore the long held interpretation of civil rights laws under which stated that if a worker filed a complaint within 180 days of a discriminatory paycheck, their charges would be timely.

"Ensuring that women receive equal pay for equal work is a common-sense issue that affects all working women and their families," Rodriguez concluded. "By eliminating unfair treatment in the labor market, we can help families gain the resources they need to ensure that their children have access to a better future."

Rodriguez is also supporting the Paycheck Fairness Act which would strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963 by providing more effective solutions to women who are not being paid equal wages for doing equal work. The bill would also require the Department of Labor to enhance

outreach and training programs to work with employers to eliminate pay disparities and would create a new grant program to help strengthen the negotiation skills of girls and women.

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Congressman *Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23)* serves as a Member of the powerful House Appropriations Committee and the Veterans Affairs Committee. For more information about Rodriguez, see his website at rodriguez.house.gov.